

Case Study

POST ACQUISITION COMMUNICATION COORS BREWERS LTD



Background

In February 2002, after months of uncertainty, US brewer, Coors, acquired the former Bass Brewers. The new parent was an unknown entity for most of the 3200 employees and therefore, internal communication was of paramount importance.

Objectives

Lesley Allman, then Director of Communication for Coors, needed to devise and implement a communication programme, which would inform and support employees through the post-acquisition transition period from announcement of the deal through to full integration.

Approach

Naturally, there were mixed emotions within the workforce, including some anxiety over what the future held under the ownership of a new company. A transition curve was utilised to ensure the content, tone and methods of communication were tailored to employees' reaction to the company's major change, resulting in this campaign being structured into the two distinct phases of providing 'information' and 'support'.*

Actions

First phase: Inform

- Coors US Chief Executive Leo Kiely held face-to-face presentations with the Board/Senior Managers. In addition, Coors US Board members held site visits and Q&A sessions at offices and breweries.
- A personally addressed letter from Coors Chairman, Pete Coors, was posted to employee homes welcoming them to the Coors family. A special edition of the company magazine, exchanging views and information from employees on both sides of the Atlantic, was distributed to UK and US employees.
- A 10-minute radio programme, Brewradio, featuring the new UK Chief Executive Peter Kendall, and Leo Kiely was made available to all employees via one telephone number. All announcements were published on a purpose-designed 'Coorsnet' website.

Second phase: Support

- A strategic business review to determine the company's future shape and structure involved face-to-face consultation with 18 elected employee representatives and culminated with a brewery closure. Emphasis at this time was to support those directly affected and continue to inform the rest of the company.

Results

Employee email surveys were conducted following each phase of the campaign, which found:

- 75% of respondents felt the amount of information they had received was just right and 89% felt their questions had been adequately answered.
- Employee opinion of Coors as a parent company rose from 48% to 78% by the end of the campaign.

Industry feedback

The communication programme received an award at both the IPR Excellence Awards and the Central British Association of Business Communicators in 2003.

**see website for other case studies re providing 'clear direction' and 'building employee involvement and engagement' following acquisition.*

Talk to us



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